

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) issued the following statement today opposing President Bush's proposal to cut \$178 billion from Medicare. The fiscal year 2009 budget unveiled today by the President would freeze payments to hospitals and other health care providers.

"I strongly support the administration's goal to balance the budget without raising taxes," said Buchanan. "But it's not fair to put the burden on our seniors who rely on Medicare for their health care coverage. The way to balance the budget is to promote economic growth and eliminate wasteful spending.

"My district is home to 176,721 seniors age 65 and over," said the 13th District Congressman. "We already have a shortage of health care providers who are willing to serve elderly patients who depend on Medicare for their health care coverage. Freezing reimbursement rates will make the problem worse.

"What we need is meaningful reform to meet the needs of seniors today and in the future," added Buchanan. "Each year we fail to address the issue, the worse the problem becomes and the more difficult the solutions will be. I look forward to working toward a bipartisan solution."

Buchanan has introduced legislation to amend the constitution to require a balanced budget and cosponsored legislation to make permanent tax cuts for working families.